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ABSTRACT

In 1965, the concept and need for mid-career education for public administrators at the local level received attention through three studies (Detroit, Berkeley, Syracuse) sponsored by the National Institute for Public Affairs. There is agreement that the curriculum for such programs should be derived from the social sciences. Teaching methods should be varied, including involvement-type techniques related to the examination of value assumptions and personal perspectives; interim, back-home assignments should be incorporated when possible. The residential, intensive, and complex learning experience necessary to create an effect on the conduct of urban affairs requires funding beyond normal local resources; there must be an expansion of Federal funding. (EB)

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Mid-career Education for Municipal Clerks

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During the past 2 or 3 years we at Syracuse University have enjoyed an unusually close cooperative association with the officers and members of the Education Committee of IIMC. We've learned a great deal in the process about the complex and impressive responsibilities of municipal clerks -- how busy they are, how concerned they are with the need to professionalize their work, to upgrade the position, to improve the quality of local government. We have also learned what great fun municipal clerks can be. In fact, they are among the best party people we've ever had at the Continuing Education Center.

Frank Dotseth has asked me to talk with you about "mid-career or post-entry education for municipal clerks" -- a subject which I've discussed on several occasions before with other professional groups. Most of what I've said to mayors, budget directors, planners, police chiefs and other governmental officials pertains just as much to municipal clerks.

Yesterday, at a meeting of the Education Committee, a question was raised as to why we have the kind of program that we do in Syracuse for clerks. What I have to say this morning relates to that question.

First of all, I want to say how greatly impressed we at Syracuse

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have been with the seriousness and sense of dedication and committment shown by your officers and committee members in the development and promotion of the IIMC program concept at Syracuse. This is certainly one of the most imaginative, ambitious and significant experiments in continuing education for the public service in this country.

Every local official today is faced constantly with the interrelated challenges of rapidly changing technology, impact of mass media, mushrooming demands for services, and the effects of social revolutions building up throughout our social order.

The modern urban administrator might long nostalgically for the days when he could count on his own knowledge, the abilities of his staff and possibly the advice of a few like-minded citizens to reach viable decisions. One of the major problems, of course, is to re-educate these administrators as to the changed conditions of political and social viability in today's urban setting. Daily routines of these administrators find them facing all sorts of new and changing situations and developments, including many different conflicting interest groups, intergovernmental relations, new state and federal programs, new citizen movements and demands, new technological developments, new problems of interpersonal and inter-group communications and human relations.

Harlan Cleveland, former U.S. Ambassador to NATO, has summarized some of the significance of these changing requirements and relationships. "<u>In every community, and notably in the metropolitan areas, a new pattern of leadership now spreads the power to affect the community's destiny, breaking the leadership monopolies traditionally held by businessmen, business lawyers, and early-arriving ethnic groups. In the new competition for influence, any group can play;</u>

the ticket of admission for its leaders or hired professionals is now skill in organization and a working knowledge of inter-governmental complexity, for every decision is shared with other groups, and every major improvement -- a new hospital, a downtown plaza, a poverty program, a community college, a metropolitan water plan, or whatever -- involves the creative manipulation of multiple public authorities." Cleveland noted the revolutionary change in administration "away from the more formal, hierarchical, order-giving way of doing business and toward the more informal, fluid workways of bargaining, brokerage, advice, and consent."

Responding to Ambassador Cleveland's analysis, Arthur Naftalin former Mayor of Minneapolis, characterized the effective administrator as "something of a political broker, one who relates and organizes the needed specialties in a horizontal sharing of power, in contrast to the public executive who, in a less complex time, administered by sending his orders vertically down the organizational pyramid." The modern public official, according to Mayor Naftalin has a new role, new function, new style. "It is a role of coordinating, directing, organizing, and leading in the midst of increasing complexity; it is a function of fashioning appropriately new and adaptable instruments for executing policy and its style, of necessity, is one that is democratic in spirit, low-key in manner, and respectful of knowledge and capability. Because knowledge is specialized and therefore diffused, power is diffused, and the public executive must know how to organize the diffusion."

There are other indicators of the need for and the nature of mid-career educational experiences for those in the local public service.

There is the very difficult and new problem of how best to make use of the technicians, the specialists, the mechanisms of modern decision-making without becoming servant to or victim of this instrumentalism. The modern urban administrator must be knowledgeable enough to recognize implications, applications and limitations of the specialist's work.

While making use of the sometimes frightening proliferation of highly specialized technicians and their amazing tools, the administrator needs to be reminded that in the final analysis "for making the choices and taking the chances just ahead, every public executive will be more dependent on his personal moral gyroscope -- his own ethical hunch -- than ever before." The nature of our times requires the urban administrator to be concerned about values and goals, about man's potential growth, about philosophical ends. He is daily immersed in "people problems" demanding that he combine within himself a wide-ranging knowledge of the resources available for tackling public problems, analytic and judgmental ability in the application of the tools, and a reflective, moral concern and approach to his responsibility.

To summarize, then, the need for and values of mid-career education for people in the public services -- there are the traditionally cited values of up-dating persons professionally and technically in their special fields; the preparation of upward bound personnel for more complex executive responsibilities; broadening the social and political perspectives of the job; improving the understanding of changing nature and challenges of the position and the societal matrix within which it operates...

Today, it is seldom sufficient to talk in terms of traditional or usual values or needs; there is a good deal of talk today about relevance -- about counting for something, "being with it" to use the language of the day. It does seem to me that mid-career education should help the adult to become more relevant and current in regard to the revolutionary character of our times; more ready and willing to understand changes; not so willing to seclude one's thinking in the sad comment that things certainly aren't what they used to be. We just concluded a conference for our County Legislators during which students were protesting at our University against the Cambodia exercise; far too often the response of the legislators was an immediate condemnation of students, a retreat to the way it used to be, a resort to traditional ways of looking at behavior and events-- a non-analytical response. Mid-career education ought to help such people to free their thinking from emotional responses, to give them a predisposition to think through situations before reacting, to look for reasons and understanding in social history. The municipal clerk today cannot live only or primarily as a clerk, just as the finance director or any other specialist cannot really live successfully within the perspectives of his position. Every public official, as every thinking citizen, has responsibilities relating to fundamental changes and challenges facing our society, including the drastic threats to our environment by an excessively materialistically oriented way of life, abusive use of drugs, racial antagonisms, crime, the alienation of large segments of our population from the mainstream of American life and the many other complex and frustrating problems complicating

our lives. Now, what does this all mean in terms of the kind of mid-career education we should be promoting?

The implications for the training of local public officials have been explored most frequently since 1965. In that year, the whole concept and need for mid-career education for public administrators working at the local level received new and continuing attention through three studies sponsored by the National Institute for Public Affairs. In the Detroit area, the Metropolitan Fund in cooperation with several universities there, prepared a study of needs in the Detroit region and proposed a plan for Mid-career education for local and state government officials. At Berkeley, the University of California developed another approach to the problem of meeting the continuing educational needs of administrators at work on local problems. In Syracuse, the Maxwell Graduate School provided a third analysis of needs and possible programs in the field of mid-career education for the local public service.

In each of these studies and in most of the subsequent discussions on this subject, the question of proper emphasis of content has received much attention. In large measure, students of this relatively new field in continuing education have argued for programs designed to produce administrative generalists, broad-gauged executives, men and women capable of recognizing the interdisciplinary character of urban conditions and problems and the implications for attacking such problems. In view of the rapid change factor in urban affairs and the complex and interrelated nature of urban problems, there has been much criticism of highly specialized and traditionally compartmentalized education and training for local public administrators.

Yet, the United State Office of Education has found relatively few mid-career programs designed to broaden personal and social horizons or to create broad-gauged public executives. For the vast majority of administrative and professional personnel working at the local level, there are no training opportunities of <u>any</u> kind available. In 1967, the International City Managers' Association found only 27% of 1,165 cities providing or making available any kind of training for such personnel. Most programs for local government personnel seem to be aimed at police, firemen or office workers. The Municipal Manpower Commission's Report on <u>Governmental Manpower for Tomorrow's Cities</u> (1962) noted that many cities would soon be in serious trouble since the high quality administrators recruited during the depression would be retiring and local governments were making feeble efforts to recruit college graduates or up-grade new personnel.

From the various studies and proposals on mid-career education, there seem to emerge some common, distinguishable suggestions or directions for the kind of mid-career education needed by today's urban administrator. There is wide-spread agreement that the <u>curriculum</u> most appropriate and effective for such mid-career programs should be derived from the various Social Science disciplines. The ideas in the program should be woven together from the Social Science specialties in an inter-disciplinary manner, not presented as traditional courses or parts of courses in Sociology or Economics or Political Science. The academic insights should be combined in a focus on the nature of the modern community and its problems.

The infusion of broadening perspectives should provide fresh and more relevant approaches to the bewildering complex of problems facing urban administrators, most of whom were prepared for their specialized positions ten or twenty years ago.

In regard to instructional methods, there is major emphasis on the use of a variety of approaches, including involvement -- type techniques related to the examination of value assumptions and personal perspectives. The value of interim, back-home assignments, requiring the practical application of classroom learning to the real and urgent situation, should be incorporated whenever possible. This type of exercise is especially useful in creating a team-work, inter-functional relationship at the local level, and in providing a lasting, reinforcing effect to academic lessons. The technique has been adapted successfully to a number of quite different training programs for professional personnel by the Continuing Education Center at Syracuse. In this connection, it should be pointed out that one of the most hopeful developments related to mid-career education for the public service is the experimentation and programmatic innovation taking place in university continuing education. The entire tradition and character of continuing education in urban universities is conducive to creating and conducting special programs for urban administrators. One much-needed result ought to be more sophisticated and effective evaluations of approaches and techniques. No one seems to have had the time or skill or funds to investigate how effective various programs or methods have been in the past.

The use of a "back-home" assignment relates to the factor of time available for post-entry education. It is widely recognized

that very few administrators working at the local level can undertake long-term educational programs. Departments are short-handed and training budgets are limited. It is most unlikely that mid-career programs requiring extensive time away from the job can be successful. A residential experience of two weeks is probably the maximum which could be scheduled at any given time. The time arrangement for IIMC program (1 week each for 3 years) represents one effective compromise in this respect.

Finally, in regard to financing midcareer programs for the local public service, most of the imaginative, far-reaching proposals which might make some difference will require some form of external funding. Although decision-making officials in the Detroit study and other authorities in some urban areas have indicated willingness to pay for post-entry education, this usually means an in-service, short-term, more specialized type of experience. The in-residence, more intensive and complex learning experience necessary for creating any effect on the conduct of urban affairs requires funding well beyond the resources normally available to local jurisdictions. Considering the well-documented need for mid-career programs on a very large scale to help solve the urgent problems of urban America, there must be a dramatic expansion of Federal funding of a different dimension than the tentative and meager beginnings suggested by current H.U.D. and H.E.W. programs. Ideally - and it must not yet be too late for ideals -- a relatively minor expenditure of the nation's resources will enable our universities to be effective in creating an urban civilization relevant and worthy for our time -- by lifting and enlarging the moral commitment, professional knowledge and imagination of those charged with special responsibility for the quality of urban society.

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